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 SUBJECT: GOOD PROGRESS AT SECOND CBSI WG MEETING

 SUMMARY

¶1. (U) An August 13 working group meeting between Caribbean officials and USG representatives made good progress on moving the President's security agenda for the Caribbean region forward. The two sides agreed to craft a political declaration, strategy, and action plan to frame assistance under the initiative, and agreed to hold a follow-up working group meeting in Santo Domingo in October and a high-level dialogue in the U.S. tentatively scheduled for December. The two sides did not agree on adding other donor countries to the group, as the Caribbean side was eager to highlight partnership with the USG. This meeting showed our Caribbean counterparts to be more focused and serious about operationalizing this engagement than at any time in recent memory. Delegates list at end of cable. End summary.

 Caribbean Delegation Focused, Prepared

¶2. (U) In Bridgetown, August 13, 2009, officials representing, inter alia, Barbados, St. Kitts, the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, CARICOM, RSS, and the United States of America held a meeting of the Joint Working Group on Caribbean-US Regional Security Cooperation (also known as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, or hereafter, CBSI). The meeting was the second follow-up to the President's pledge at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad in April, 2009 to re-engage with the region on common security concerns, and followed a successful preparatory meeting in Paramaribo on May 20.

¶3. (U) Each delegation presented its contribution to the CBSI strategy, followed by feedback on the presentations by the other delegations. This was followed by delegation presentations on the regulatory instruments and institutions, resource mobilization initiatives, and the reporting and review procedures utilized within CBSI's cooperation framework. With regards to the implementation of the arrangements of the CBSI, discussion pertained to the categories, prioritization, responsibility for, and mechanisms for engagement.

¶4. (U) The Caribbean delegation's preparation was focused, detailed, and comprehensive, in stark contrast to the expected norm from CARICOM consensus-making procedures. It included a detailed

matrix, broken down by "pillars" (threat reduction, vulnerability reduction, and capacity building), which showed a great deal of consideration had been given to providing the USDEL with a detailed needs assessment on a regional basis. Also of note was the effort made by CARICOM member delegates to fully involve the Dominican Republic's delegates and inputs into their final document. The Caribbean delegation in fact spent an entire day August 12 incorporating the DR's inputs into their presentation, and replaced all of the documentation labeled "CARICOM-US" with "Caribbean-US" in recognition of the need to include the DR as a full member of the Caribbean delegation. The Caribbean delegation's chair, St. Kitts National Security Ministry PERMSEC Astona Brown, also made specific mention of the Regional Security System (RSS) as a crucial partner in developing a security assistance program for the region - an important tip of the hat to bring the RSS, which is often marginalized by CARICOM, into the discussions as a full partner.

Decisions and Next Steps

15. (U) Political Declaration: The Caribbean delegation's initial presentation envisioned what amounted to a formal signed agreement as the governing document for a new regional security partnership. The USDEL walked that proposal back and secured agreement to instead negotiate a Political Declaration that would be issued following the first high-level meeting (details below) and would establish the goals of the partnership. The USDEL also proposed, and the Caribbean delegation agreed, to develop a strategy and to create an action plan to accompany the Declaration that would set measurable goals and timelines for further progress.

16. (U) Development of Needs Assessment: Drawing on the excellent first draft of a needs assessment matrix compiled by the Caribbean delegation, the USDEL agreed to comment on proposals and to add programs into the mix that were not in the initial assessment in order to capture assistance that is currently available through various USG agencies. The Dominican delegation undertook to provide to CARICOM their needs and capacities assessment for input into the assessment matrix.

17. (U) Next Steps: The USDEL proposed, and the Caribbean delegation agreed, that the next WG meeting should be hosted by the Dominican Republic, tentatively the first week of October, 2009. [Note: The DR MFA subsequently confirmed their willingness to host in Santo Domingo the first week of October in a letter to WHA/CAR Director De Pirro. End note.] Both sides agreed to work in the interim to develop a draft Political Declaration, a Strategy and an Action Plan, with an eye to finalizing the three documents at the October WG meeting. The USDEL also agreed to have all of its comments and additions to the assistance matrix added by the date of the WG meeting. Finally, the USDEL proposed and the Caribbean delegation accepted in principle that the USG would host a high level dialogue tentatively in early December, to adopt the Declaration, Strategy and Action Plan. The level of participation was left open.

No Agreement on Expanding the Group

18. (U) The USDEL proposed on several occasions that the group consider expanding participation in the initiative to include other potential donor countries and organizations - notably the UK, Canada, France, the Netherlands, the EU and the OAS and UN - on the argument that doing so would improve donor coordination, ensure assistance programs were complementary and not duplicative. The Caribbean delegation raised a number of concerns with the proposal, though, noting that expanding the group could make it too large to be effective and noting that doing so would force them back to the drawing board to incorporate program elements they specifically left out because they were underway with other donors.

19. (U) Moreover, there was a palpable reluctance on the part of the Caribbean delegation to "dilute" the focused partnership with the U.S. on a high-visibility, long term engagement plan. The delegation clearly valued partnership with the U.S. and was eager to maintain our full and undivided attention. In side discussions with

CARICOM Assistant Secretary General Colin Granderson and others, USDEL clarified that expansion to foreign partners could take place in stages. First, bringing in only Canada, the UK, France, the Netherlands and possibly Spain, which are already regional and bilateral security partners for the United States and Caribbean countries. Expansion to others, such as Mexico, Colombia, Central America, UN, OAS, and SICA could be left for future discussion.

COMMENT

10. (U) Caribbean participants were serious, focused, and ready to work on institutional and operational issues. While internal coordination or the Caribbean countries will be tricky - especially since we have made it clear that CARICOM will not be our negotiating partner - the region sees an opportunity here to hold the sustained attention of the U.S. and to put some real programs in play to address critical security concerns.

11 (U) The Caribbean side was also clearly pleased with the inclusion of social dimension programs, specially those dealing with at-risk youth and juvenile justice. A common complaint in the region over the past few years has been that the U.S. is concerned only with counter-narcotics law enforcement activity, and that broader issues of regional crime and insecurity have been ignored. This WG meeting showed regional partners eager to engage on these broader issues and very happy to see us ready to do the same. On a similar note, our regional partners were clearly pleased to have the undivided attention of the USG, reflected in their reluctance to internationalize the group to include other donors.

12. (U) Delegates list:

Representing Barbados

Mrs. Antoinette WILLIAMS, Permanent Secretary Office of the Attorney General

Ms. Teresa MARSHALL, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Mr. Gilbert GREAVES, Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Defence and Security

Mr. Darwin DOTTIN, Commissioner of Police

Col. Alvin QUINTYNE, Chief of Staff

Ms. Shirley BELL, Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Attorney General

Representing St. Kitts

Mrs. Astona M. BROWNE, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security and Immigration

Representing The Bahamas

Ms. A Missouri SHERMAN-PETER, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security

Representing the Dominican Republic

Ambassador Rafael B DIAZ, Secretary of State For External Relations, Ministry of External Relations

Mr. Diogenes CHECO, National Drugs Council

Mr. Braulio DE LA ROSA

General Ismael Antonio ALVARADO

Representing Trinidad and Tobago

Mrs. Jennifer BOUCAUD-BLAKE, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security

Mrs. Claire EXETER, Snr. International Relations Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Antoinette LUCAS-ANDREWS, International Affairs Advisor, Ministry of National Security

Col. Roland MAUNDAY, Defence Attach, Washington (Designate), Ministry of National Security

Col. Anthony PHILLIPS-SPENCER, Defence Attach, Washington (Outgoing), Ministry of National Security

Mrs. Claire DE BOURG, Senior International Relations Officer,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Norton JACK, Senior Legal Advisor to the Attorney General,
Ministry of the Attorney General

Representing CARICOM

Ms. Lynne Anne WILLIAMS, Executive Director, CARICOM IMPACS
Mr. Francis FORBES, Director, Liaison Office, CARICOM IMPACS
Mr. Michael JONES, Director (Ag.), JRCC, CARICOM IMPACS
Mr. Collin MILLINGTON, Director, RIFC, CARICOM IMPACS
Ms. Selicia DOUGLAS, Policy and Research Analyst, CARICOM IMPACS
Ms. Chesley OLLIVIERRE, Research Officer, CARICOM IMPACS
Dr. Annmarie BARNES, Security consultant
Mr. Colin GRANDERSON, Assistant Secretary General, Directorate of
Foreign and Community Relations, CARICOM SECRETARIAT
Ms. B Van Dyke, Rapporteur, CARICOM SECRETARIAT
Mr. Nigel Duncan, Conference Services, CARICOM SECRETARIAT

Representing the United States of America

Dr. D. Brent Hardt, Charge' d'Affaires, a.i. U.S. Embassy
Bridgetown, U.S. Department of State
Ms. Velia DE PIRRO, US Department of State
Mr. Mike FORTIN, US Department of State
Mr. Giovanni SNIDLE, US Department of State
Mr. Michael KITE, USAID
COL Alfred BROOKS, SOUTHCOM
Ms. Ashley RICHARDSON, US Department of Defense
LTC Nicole BONTRAGER, US Joint Staff
Ms. Kathleen O'CONNOR, US Department of Justice
Mr. Larry MIZELL, US Department of Homeland Security
CPT Scott JENDRO, JIATF-South
Ms. Carol HORNING, US Embassy, Georgetown
Mr. John MOPPERT, US Embassy, Nassau
Mr. Joseph RUNYON, US Embassy, Santo Domingo
Ms. Geneve MENSCHER, US Embassy, Paramaribo
Mr. Sean OSNER, US Embassy, Kingston
Ms. Ebony CUSTIS, US Embassy, Port of Spain
Mr. Ian CAMPBELL, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Mr. Jim GOGGIN, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Mr. Norm SCOTT, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Mr. Mark MC HUGH, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Mr. Jack ZALEWSKI, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Mr. Ed GAYNOR, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Dr. Robert BONCY, USAID
Ms Cheryl KAST, US Embassy, Bridgetown
Mr. Curtis FLOURNOY, US Embassy, Bridgetown